

Farm Labor

Release:
April 10, 1964
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FARM EMPLOYMENT RISES SEASONALLY

Farm employment during the last week in March rose 12 percent over the previous month but was 6 percent below the same period of last year--and the lowest of record. The decline from March 1963 reflects unfavorable weather in most parts of the country, increasing farm mechanization, and continuing consolidation of farms.

Family and hired workers during the last week of March 1964 totaled 5,304,000. There were 4,227,000 family workers on farms, down 5 percent from last March; farmers employed 1,077,000 hired workers, a drop of 12 percent.

Later than Usual Spring Delays Farm Work in Many Areas

Winter lingered on throughout most of the Nation during the last week of March. Snow, light to heavy rains, and temperatures well below normal in many areas either stopped or greatly limited land preparation and spring planting in many States. Farmers in the southern half of the Nation made some progress with their spring plowing and planting, although field work was behind schedule in several States. In the Southeast, farmers have been hindered by wet soils for a number of weeks. In other parts of the country, routine chores, fencing, caring for livestock, preparing land, and seeding and planting spring crops were main farm activities where conditions permitted.

Farm Wage Rates on April 1 Average 3 Percent Above Last Year

Farm wage rates on April 1 were moderately higher than at the same date last year in almost all States despite a general slowness in the early season pace of farm work. The continued uptrend was reported in a consistent pattern that included all hiring arrangements specified in this report. The U.S. average for workers hired by the hour without board or room reached \$1.14 per hour--3 percent above a year earlier. Daily wage rates without board or room averaged \$7.10. Workers on a per month basis with house furnished averaged \$206. The composite average wage rate reached \$.827 per hour. The index of this rate, seasonally adjusted, was 3 percent above the same date in 1963 and 21 percent above the comparable average for 1957-59.

The State and U.S. wage rate comparisons shown on pages 6 and 7 of this report represent rates paid on farms of crop and livestock reporters or in their localities for hiring arrangements specified and include only cash wage payments. Alaska rates, not included in these tables, averaged \$390 per month with house, \$310 per month with board and room, \$16.50 per day without board or room, and \$1.95 per hour without board or room.

Sectional Farm Work Ranges from Maple Sugaring to Cotton Planting

In New England, farm activity was hampered by rains and snow. Orchard pruning was active and plowing was underway in some southern areas of New England. Temperatures were generally favorable for maple sap flow, and sugaring activity in Vermont was at a seasonal peak.

Melting snows and rains kept soils too wet for plowing in many areas of mid-Atlantic States, although soil preparation for spring planting was well underway in New Jersey and the southern regions of Pennsylvania. New Jersey farmers were planting potatoes, lettuce, onions, and peas. Farmers in New York were collecting maple sirup, pruning fruit trees, and tying grape vines.

There was some seeding of oats, grasses and legumes, and spreading of fertilizer in the North Central States, but wet soils, snow, rain, wind, and below normal temperatures generally kept outdoor activity at a minimum. Most farm work consisted of winter chores and preparing seed and machinery for spring planting. Fruit tree and grape vine pruning was nearly completed in Michigan. In Nebraska, calves were arriving in large numbers and were requiring considerable care. In ranching areas, snow and wind made feeding difficult.

In the South Atlantic States, excessive soil moisture and rainfall reduced farm work considerably during late March. Corn and cotton was being planted in areas where soil conditions were favorable. Planting and seedbed preparation increased in a wide belt stretching from Georgia to Mississippi, although the ground was too wet for plowing in some sections of this area. Some farmers were transplanting tobacco in the lower Southeast, while farmers in the upper region were preparing and seeding tobacco seed beds. Citrus harvest in Florida increased as concentrate plants increased their intake of Valencia oranges. Vegetable harvest was increasing gradually.

Cold weather in late March damaged the peach crop in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, reducing farm employment prospects in these areas for the peach harvest season.

Except for Kentucky, the East South Central States moved ahead with land preparation and spring planting during the last week of March. In Tennessee, seeding of tobacco beds continued with about 80 percent of the beds seeded. Some beds were seeded in Kentucky, but most field work was scattered and limited because of record rainfall in March. Generally clear, warm weather prevailed in most other areas and drier soils enabled farmers to make good progress in plowing, planting corn, tomatoes, and watermelons, and in fertilizing and seeding pastures.

Land preparation and spring planting were underway in most areas of the West South Central States, although rains and wet soils restricted field work in sections of Arkansas and Louisiana. Cotton and corn planting moved along in the drier areas. In Louisiana, some early rice was planted and shaving and offbarring of sugarcane continued. Harvest of strawberries had just begun around Hammond.

In the Mountain States, ranchers were devoting considerable time to feeding and caring for livestock, with calving and lambing underway and a late winter requiring more than usual supplemental feeding. Irrigation of vegetables and alfalfa, and of cotton land were underway in New Mexico and Arizona; cotton planting was just getting started in the southern areas. In Arizona, lettuce and citrus were being harvested. Winter lettuce shipments reached peak volume at Yuma on March 23, with harvest expected to be completed by mid-April. Spring lettuce harvest was well underway in the Salt River Valley.

Farm work advanced normally on the Pacific Coast except for some areas where dry soils and low temperatures delayed field work. Light rains also hampered vegetable harvest and spring planting in some sections. Vegetable planting was active in the Yakima Valley, Columbia Basin, and Walla Walla areas of Washington. Fruit and grape pruning was about completed. Spraying of fruit orchards, tree pruning, and fruit tree planting were the principal farm activities in Oregon where snow cover and low temperatures have hampered farm work. Harvest of navel oranges, lemons, and grapefruit continued in southern California. Pre-planting irrigation of cotton land continued, but cool weather slowed early cotton planting. Sugar beets, safflower, corn, and grain sorghum planting was underway. Field activities in Northern California were held back by cold weather and snow.

Farm employment and indexes, March 1964, with comparisons, United States

	: Annual : average : 1958-62 1/	: Annual : average : 1962	: Annual : average : 1963	: March : average : 1958-62 1/	: March : 24-30, : 1963	: March : 22-28, : 1964
FARM EMPLOYMENT						
(Thousands)						
Total	7,104	6,700	6,518	6,042	5,668	5,304
Family labor	5,197	4,873	4,738	4,764	4,444	4,227
Hired labor	1,907	1,827	1,780	1,278	1,224	1,077
INDEXES 2/						
(1910-14=100)						
Total	52	49	48	52	49	46
Family labor	51	48	47	52	48	46
Hired labor	56	54	52	56	54	47
(1957-59=100)						
Total	94	90	86	95	89	84
Family labor	94	88	86	95	88	84
Hired labor	97	93	91	97	93	82

1/ Employment during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

2/ Monthly indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

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Farm Wage Rates and Indexes, April 1, 1964, United States

	: Annual : average : 1963	: April : average : 1958-62:	: April 1, : 1963	: April 1, : 1964
FARM WAGE RATES				
Composite rate per hour 1/	\$ 0.880	\$ 0.732	\$ 0.799	\$ 0.827
Per month with house	206	182	199	206
Per month board and room	159	143	154	158
Per week with board and room	37.50	34.50	36.50	38.00
Per week without board and room ..	48.50	45.00	47.25	49.25
Per day with house	5.70	5.10	5.60	5.90
Per day with board and room	6.90	5.90	6.30	6.50
Per day without board or room	7.10	6.30	6.80	7.10
Per hour with house94	.76	.84	.86
Per hour without board or room	1.05	1.01	1.11	1.14
INDEXES 2/				
(1910-14=100)	677	630	683	703
(1957-59=100)	116	108	117	121

1/ Weighted average of all rates on a per hour basis.

2/ Indexes are adjusted for seasonal variation.

Workers on Farms, March 1964
(Thousands of persons)

Region and State	March average			March 1963			March 1964		
	1958-62 1/			Week of 24-30			Week of 22-28		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	28	20	8	26	19	7	25	19	6
N. H.	10	8	2	9	7	2	9	7	2
Vt.	29	22	7	23	18	5	21	17	4
Mass.	33	22	11	26	17	9	24	16	8
R. I.	4	3	1	3	2	1	2	1	1
Conn.	23	17	6	20	14	6	18	13	5
N. Eng.	127	92	35	107	77	30	99	73	26
N. Y.	146	103	43	122	88	34	112	80	32
N. J.	36	25	11	29	20	9	28	19	9
Pa.	176	152	24	150	131	19	145	126	19
M. Atl.	358	280	78	301	239	62	285	225	60
Ohio	232	205	27	205	181	24	200	178	22
Ind.	207	191	16	183	171	12	179	167	12
Ill.	220	178	42	206	166	40	190	158	32
Mich.	192	169	23	180	159	21	176	154	22
Wis.	272	248	24	247	224	23	237	218	19
E. N. Cent.	1123	991	132	1021	901	120	982	875	107
Minn.	235	212	23	214	195	19	203	187	16
Iowa	255	235	20	254	235	19	236	222	14
Mo.	234	212	22	225	205	20	207	191	16
N. Dak.	79	70	9	74	67	7	66	60	6
S. Dak.	88	82	6	85	79	6	77	73	4
Nebr.	138	122	16	121	108	13	117	108	9
Kans.	143	130	13	141	127	14	136	125	11
W. N. Cent.	1172	1063	109	1114	1016	98	1042	966	76
Del.	10	7	3	9	6	3	7	5	2
Md.	50	36	14	48	35	13	43	33	10
Va.	163	132	31	150	115	35	146	120	26
W. Va.	61	51	10	50	41	9	50	42	8
N. C.	274	235	39	295	242	53	252	215	37
S. C.	144	97	47	124	86	38	109	78	31
Ga.	157	119	38	151	117	34	124	93	31
Fla.	148	52	96	152	51	101	146	49	97
S. Atl.	1007	729	278	979	693	286	877	635	242
Ky.	199	169	30	196	161	35	193	158	35
Tenn.	190	154	36	188	150	38	181	149	32
Ala.	114	90	24	100	78	22	96	80	16
Miss.	196	152	44	183	140	43	172	132	40
E. S. Cent.	699	565	134	667	529	138	642	519	123
Ark.	175	116	59	168	107	61	142	93	49
La.	135	87	48	122	77	45	110	72	38
Okla.	145	129	16	134	119	15	129	117	12
Tex.	341	242	99	326	240	86	311	227	84
W. S. Cent.	796	574	222	750	543	207	692	509	183
Mont.	46	38	8	44	36	8	41	35	6
Idaho	53	43	10	52	42	10	49	41	8
Wyo.	16	12	4	16	12	4	16	12	4
Colo.	53	44	9	50	42	8	46	39	7
N. Mex.	30	19	11	30	20	10	28	19	9
Ariz.	40	9	31	39	9	30	37	9	28
Utah	26	20	6	24	19	5	21	17	4
Nev.	4	3	1	4	3	1	4	3	1
Mount.	268	188	80	259	183	76	242	175	67
Wash.	98	71	27	94	69	25	90	67	23
Oreg.	86	68	18	85	66	19	81	64	17
Calif.	308	143	165	291	128	163	272	119	153
Pac.	492	282	210	470	263	207	443	250	193
U. S.	6042	4764	1278	5668	4444	1224	5304	4227	1077

1/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

Workers on farms: Comparative estimates, annual average 1963
January and February 1964

(Thousands of persons)

Region and State	Annual Average			January 1964			February 1964		
	1963			Week of 19-25			Week of 16-22		
	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired
Maine	32	20	12	21	16	5	23	18	5
N. H.	10	7	3	8	6	2	9	7	2
Vt.	24	18	6	20	16	4	22	17	5
Mass.	30	18	12	20	15	5	21	15	6
R. I.	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
Conn.	22	14	8	14	11	3	17	12	5
N. Eng.	121	79	42	85	65	20	94	70	24
N. Y.	143	96	47	106	82	24	106	80	26
N. J.	39	21	18	25	17	8	24	17	7
Pa.	162	134	28	119	104	15	135	119	16
M. Atl.	344	251	93	250	203	47	265	216	49
Ohio	217	183	34	151	140	11	175	163	12
Ind.	199	173	26	154	147	7	157	149	8
Ill.	235	187	48	164	139	25	169	144	25
Mich.	206	165	41	152	131	21	164	143	21
Wis.	258	230	28	214	199	15	222	205	17
E. N. Cent.	1115	938	177	835	756	79	887	804	83
Minn.	256	220	36	193	182	11	189	174	15
Iowa	283	243	40	192	178	14	205	190	15
Mo.	256	220	36	198	185	13	192	180	12
N. Dak.	83	67	16	48	44	4	53	48	5
S. Dak.	87	76	11	62	58	4	64	59	5
Nebr.	144	122	22	114	105	9	112	104	8
Kans.	149	126	23	111	105	6	119	110	9
W. N. Cent.	1258	1074	184	918	857	61	934	865	69
Del.	12	7	5	7	5	2	6	4	2
Md.	54	37	17	35	27	8	33	26	7
Va.	170	119	51	123	102	21	123	101	22
W. Va.	57	47	10	38	33	5	43	37	6
N. C.	407	291	116	213	189	24	234	203	31
S. C.	162	108	54	90	71	19	96	72	24
Ga.	170	124	46	84	62	22	105	81	24
Fla.	121	44	77	134	40	94	137	41	96
S. Atl.	1153	777	376	724	529	195	777	565	212
Ky.	238	185	53	178	158	20	172	153	19
Tenn.	235	178	57	151	135	16	154	133	21
Ala.	136	103	33	78	66	12	86	70	16
Miss.	211	146	65	110	93	17	129	103	26
E. S. Cent.	820	612	208	517	452	65	541	459	82
Ark.	190	106	84	117	95	22	125	91	34
La.	141	82	59	82	64	18	101	67	34
Okla.	144	118	26	114	107	7	130	120	10
Texas	389	241	148	250	192	58	280	214	66
W. S. Cent.	864	547	317	563	458	105	636	492	144
Mont.	48	36	12	34	29	5	35	30	5
Idaho	67	47	20	38	33	5	44	38	6
Wyo.	19	13	6	12	10	2	15	11	4
Colo.	62	45	17	37	32	5	41	36	5
N. Mex.	34	20	14	25	17	8	23	17	6
Ariz.	39	9	30	37	8	29	33	7	26
Utah	31	22	9	18	15	3	19	15	4
Nev.	5	3	2	3	2	1	3	2	1
Mount.	305	195	110	204	146	58	213	156	57
Wash.	111	72	39	67	52	15	78	60	18
Oreg.	93	64	29	60	51	9	72	58	14
Calif.	334	129	205	272	116	156	253	118	135
Pac.	538	265	273	399	219	180	403	236	167
U. S.	6518	4738	1780	4495	3685	810	4750	3863	887

1/ Persons employed during the last full calendar week ending at least one day before the end of the month.

Farm Wage Rates, April 1, 1963 ^{1/}

State and Region	Per month		Per week		Per day		Per hour		Com- posite rate per hour	Indexes of composite rates 1910-14=100 2/
	With house	With board and room	With board and room	Without board or room	With house	With board and room	Without board or room	Without board or room		
	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.		
Maine	210	153	38.00	56.00	---	---	9.20	1.12	.927	587
N. H.	229	167	44.00	62.00	---	---	10.20	1.23	1.028	704
Vt.	201	158	40.00	57.00	---	---	9.80	1.17	.964	667
Mass.	250	167	47.00	67.00	---	---	10.80	1.35	1.105	752
R. I.	250	168	47.00	68.00	---	---	10.90	1.36	1.115	806
Conn.	250	170	47.00	68.00	---	---	11.00	1.38	1.123	806
N. Eng.	229	162	43.00	62.00	---	---	10.20	1.25	1.030	701
N. Y.	222	158	41.00	55.50	---	---	9.40	1.19	.851	581
N. J.	235	180	46.75	58.50	---	---	9.90	1.19	.902	716
Pa.	201	140	36.75	50.25	---	---	8.70	1.10	.774	701
M. Atl.	218	156	40.50	54.25	---	---	9.30	1.16	.835	649
Ohio	175	132	---	---	---	---	6.70	1.12	.700	616
Ind.	188	143	---	---	---	---	7.00	1.12	.728	666
Ill.	213	162	---	---	---	---	8.00	1.17	.803	684
Mich.	222	155	---	---	---	---	7.00	1.11	.768	643
Wis.	210	152	---	---	---	---	7.20	1.13	.763	608
E. N. Cent.	203	151	---	---	---	---	7.30	1.14	.760	650
Minn.	201	159	---	---	---	---	8.00	1.16	.832	592
Iowa	220	172	---	---	---	---	8.70	1.21	.877	601
Mo.	175	131	---	---	---	---	6.30	1.04	.708	718
N. Dak.	201	171	---	---	---	---	7.70	1.08	.813	519
S. Dak.	208	164	---	---	---	---	7.60	1.10	.813	554
Nebr.	226	179	---	---	---	---	8.20	1.20	.883	654
Kans.	215	160	---	---	---	---	7.80	1.17	.841	774
W. N. Cent.	205	160	---	---	---	---	7.80	1.14	.824	638
Del.	170	---	---	---	---	---	8.70	1.05	.866	873
Md.	179	127	34.00	44.00	---	---	8.20	1.04	.852	936
Va.	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.70	.71	.679	829
W. Va.	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.50	.66	.614	535
N. C.	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.40	.66	.621	776
S. C.	---	---	---	---	---	---	3.90	.49	.452	650
Ga.	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.45	.60	.532	658
Fla.	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.70	.80	.664	737
S. Atl.	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.30	.70	.619	757
Ky.	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.80	.63	.558	634
Tenn.	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.25	.54	.498	578
Ala.	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.30	.55	.486	600
Miss.	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.30	.53	.466	551
E. S. Cent.	---	---	---	---	---	---	4.40	.56	.500	592
Ark.	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.80	.68	.655	665
La.	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.00	.65	.589	671
Okla.	---	---	---	---	---	---	7.30	.93	.857	727
Tex.	---	---	---	---	---	---	6.50	.75	.727	660
W. S. Cent.	---	---	---	---	---	---	6.00	.72	.686	674
Mont.	232	183	---	---	---	---	9.70	1.15	.917	500
Idaho	270	210	---	---	---	---	10.90	1.27	1.036	638
Wyo.	240	175	---	---	---	---	9.50	1.16	.909	512
Colo.	237	175	---	---	---	---	8.80	1.15	.985	634
N. Mex.	200	140	---	---	---	---	7.50	.92	.728	662
Ariz.	279	175	---	---	---	---	9.50	1.02	.901	639
Utah	260	219	---	---	---	---	10.40	1.30	1.033	700
Nev.	245	180	---	---	---	---	10.00	1.35	.978	573
Mount.	253	177	---	---	---	---	9.40	1.09	.899	599
Wash.	287	225	---	---	---	---	11.50	1.26	1.302	654
Oreg.	261	192	---	---	---	---	10.90	1.20	1.225	615
Calif.	310	235	---	---	---	---	11.30	1.23	1.293	616
Pac.	303	230	---	---	---	---	11.30	1.23	1.288	622
U. S.	199	154	36.50	47.25	5.60	6.30	6.80	.84	.799	683

^{1/} Average rates paid on crop and livestock reporters' farms or in their localities for arrangements specified above. U. S. averages and State composite rates include estimates for unpublished State rates of small importance.

^{2/} Adjusted for seasonal variation.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
STATISTICAL REPORTING SERVICE
AGRICULTURAL ESTIMATES DIVISION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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